

Days after having been sworn into a second term as president of the United States, Ronald Reagan challenged the nation to reject bureaucratic barriers to prosperity and achievement. "We in government should learn to look at our country with the eyes of the entrepreneur, seeing possibilities where others see only problems," he said. While his comments were aimed at America's economic revitalization, he could just as easily have been talking about today's energy crisis; a dilemma that is largely our own creation.

Last week's discovery of a giant new oil and gas deposit in the Gulf of Mexico was mostly drowned out by the news of political scandal and gloomy economic reports. Yet, for those who were paying attention, this historic energy find confirmed the view of many that America has the potential to strike its own path to energy independence if we will only utilize the tools and resources at our disposal.

To be sure, the shortsighted thinking that former President Reagan warned us about was also on full display last week. Presidential spokesman Jay Carney offered a handwringing lament over the growing shortage of oil, noting the Obama administration had been in touch with oil producing countries as energy prices rise. Then, the chairman of General Motors scolded Americans for not paying enough at the pump, suggesting that the gas tax be raised by \$1 a gallon to force consumers to change their driving habits.

In South Alabama, we don't need anyone to tell us that we are not paying our fair share for gas, nor do we need to hear more excuses from an administration that would rather wall off America's energy resources than fully develop and harness them to serve our national interest.

One of the great things about our country is even in the most difficult times we can find ways to solve our problems. ExxonMobil vividly demonstrated that fact with its discovery of potentially 700 million barrels of oil equivalent in the Gulf. Despite a government-imposed drilling moratorium followed by a very restricted permitting process, ExxonMobil still accomplished this major feat.

It has been estimated that as many as 19 billion barrels of untapped oil lie buried off our shores and in Alaska. However, this American oil, as well as some 100 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, is largely off limits to development because the Obama administration believes it cannot be safely extracted. To borrow from former President Reagan, the White House sees only

problems where others see possibilities.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke cautioned last week that high oil prices were holding back our economy recovery. With demand for oil rising and oil producing countries less inclined to ramp up production – no matter how nicely we might ask them for more supply – America had better look inward for answers.

But, it's not enough to just complain about what the president isn't doing. The Republican-led House of Representatives has stepped up to the plate and passed three separate bills specifically targeting government-imposed obstacles to domestic energy production.

On May 5, we passed the "Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act" to open up offshore lease sales in the Gulf and off the coast of Virginia. On May 11, we passed the "Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act" which allows safe and responsible drilling in the Gulf, bringing back tens of thousands of lost Gulf oil drilling jobs. And, on May 12, the House passed the "Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act," which allows oil drilling in unleased areas within the country's outer continental shelf.

The administration continues to insist that America cannot develop its own energy resources in a safe and responsible manner. Nor does it admit that alternative energy research and development can be accomplished alongside the safe utilization of existing energy sources.

However, the House supports both visions for a more energy independent future – continued safe and responsible fossil fuel exploration and the development of new energy such as wind, solar and clean coal.

This "all-of-the-above" energy strategy does not see only problems, but focuses on the possibilities of greater domestic American energy. This is the energy policy I support and it's the policy that is backed by House Republicans. Unfortunately, our bold energy legislation has been blocked in the Senate where, so far, no vote has been allowed.

If the president will finally embrace an all-of-the-above energy policy, we will likely hear more

good news like last week's discovery in the Gulf. Sadly, the longer the administration delays implementing a balanced energy policy, the longer it will take to bring new energy sources on line.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.